

Notes and actions of the meeting

1. Attendance

The following partners were in attendance:

Partner organisation	Attendees	Apologies
Cheltenham Borough Council	Cllr Max Wilkinson Mike Redman	
Cotswold District Council	Rob Weaver	Cllr Rachel Coxcoo
Forest of Dean District Council	Cllr Chris McFarling Peter Williams	
Gloucester City Council	Cllr Richard Cook Jon McGinty	
Gloucestershire County Council	Cllr David Gray Philip Williams Colin Chick	
Stroud District Council	Cllr Chloe Turner Brendan Cleere	
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Cllr Jim Mason Simon Dix	
Hospitals Trusts	Deborah Lee Jen Cleary	
Clinical Commissioning Group	Mary Hutton	
Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner and Gloucestershire Constabulary	Gary Thompson Mandy Gibbs	
GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership	Sarah Danson David Owen	
Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership	Doug Hulyer Roger Mortlock Matt Whitney	
Countywide resource and Secretariat	Julian Atkins Alastair Chapman (for this meeting)	

Angela Potter, Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust, also attended the meeting.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Jon McGinty introduced the meeting and introduced Alastair Chapman who was standing in as Secretariat for the meeting in place of Afriqnum Lovejoy who was now on maternity leave. CLG Members wished to record their congratulations to Afriqnum on the birth of her child. Jon McGinty then welcomed Julian Atkins who is taking on the Countywide Climate Change Coordinator role for Afriqnum while she is away on maternity leave. Matt Whitney from the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership was also welcomed as he was attending the meeting for the main agenda item on biodiversity.

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3. *Election of Chair and Vice Chair*

Nominations for the position of Chair were invited from those in attendance and Cllr Richard Cook nominated Cllr David Gray. There were no other nominations and Cllr Gray was unanimously elected as Chair for the next 12 months.

Nominations for the position of Vice-Chair were then invited and Cllr David Gray nominated Cllr Chris McFarling. There were no other nominations and Cllr McFarling was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair for the next 12 months.

4. *Notes of the last Meeting, held November 12th, 2021 – (Paper 1)*

Jon McGinty explained that the Notes of the November meeting had been amended slightly following a request from Cllr Max Wilkinson and sought CLG's agreement that the notes were a correct record of the meeting. CLG agreed that this was the case. Jon McGinty also highlighted that the County Council had received an FOI request for a copy of the minutes and sought CLG's agreement that the notes could be released. CLG agreed that the notes could be released and also agreed the principle that notes of future CLG meetings should be treated as being public.

22/01 Action: Secretariat to liaise with the County Council's Information Management Service in closing out the FOI Request.

5. *Terms of Reference – (Paper 2)*

Jon McGinty sought approval of the Terms of Reference which had been revised since the November meeting to reflect the process now agreed regarding the election of Chair and Vice Chair.

It was raised that Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust were not listed in the Terms of Reference. It was noted that Leadership Gloucestershire were responsible for setting the terms of reference and the matter would be referred to them and that the issue of additional organisations joining the group was best dealt with outside the meeting.

22/02 Action: Secretariat to discuss the issue with Mary Hutton/Angela Potter and seek Leadership Gloucestershire's views on GHC attending the Group.

6. *Biodiversity Theme Discussion – (Paper 3 and presentation)*

Doug Huyler introduced the biodiversity theme discussion and explained his role as the independent Chair of Gloucestershire's Local Nature Partnership (GLNP). He introduced Roger Mortlock, Vice Chair of the GLNP and Matt Whitney the GLNP's Manager and explained that the focus of the biodiversity presentation centred around those actions which were best delivered in common with CLG's support and leadership and with the aim of halting climate harm (decarbonising society and the economy) and healing climate harm (through delivering natural solutions at scale). Doug Huyler also noted that there were well established biodiversity plans already in place across the County and that what was needed now was concerted effort to help nature to recover.

The Gloucester Local Nature Partnership (GLNP) prepared a discussion paper and presentation on the strategic climate actions for biodiversity across the county, based on 4 priority areas: (water, green infrastructure, space for nature and people, and carbon) and these had been chosen as being the strategic priorities where CLG can best support delivery. 19% of the land in Gloucestershire supports nature recovery but this needs to be increased to 30% by 2030.

The priorities and actions have been co-produced by 30 of the partner organisations which make up the Local Nature Partnership and build upon existing collaborative approaches to nature recovery

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already well established across the county (Building with Nature, Natural Capital Mapping, Nature Recovery Networks mapping and existing practical action). The actions sought to address three things:

- 1) what is urgent;
- 2) what needs more work; and
- 3) what we can do right now

The 12 strategic actions agreed were as follows:

Water

- Maximise catchment wide opportunities from partnerships like the River Severn Partnership
- Deliver a county-wide programme of natural flood management
- Explore new wetland creation, floodplain restoration and managed realignment opportunities

Green Infrastructure

- Secure biodiversity gains in new development and retrofit
- Training and embedding a holistic approach to green infrastructure within local government and public sector bodies
- Helping existing resources to go further in delivering green infrastructure projects

Space for Nature & People

- Create a large-scale Nature Park based on the washlands of the River Severn
- Launch a call for sites for the creation of new parks and accessible green spaces
- Increase diversity and inclusion in the accessibility of greenspace

Carbon

- Support the delivery of the Gloucestershire Tree Strategy
- Explore the carbon capture and storage potential of wetlands and wet woodlands
- Maximise the carbon sequestration potential of farming

As a parallel strand, GLNP is supporting the GFirst LEP to develop a Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund to help deliver offsite Biodiversity Net Gain and establish a carbon market for the county and it is hoped that this investment vehicle will become a significant instrument in delivering nature recovery and decarbonisation actions across the county.

GLNP led a wide ranging discussion with all of the partners on the 4 priorities and 12 strategic actions. In developing the 12 strategic actions it was noted that the following key considerations needed to be incorporated into practical delivery tasks:

Water

The geography of Gloucestershire and the challenges posed by the Severn Estuary and the headwaters of the Thames were highlighted and it was agreed that CLG is the right vehicle to progress the urgent action that is needed regarding floodplain management and wetland creation. However it was also recognised that CLG partners need to work at a catchment scale and potentially beyond the county boundary through bodies such as the River Severn Partnership.

The intersections and interdependencies between the County's water challenges and other themes was noted and in particular there was a need for close collaboration with the Adaptation, Behaviour Change, and Food and Farming themes.

The potential impacts that sea level rise will have on the Severn Estuary were also noted and it was important to learn from best practice elsewhere such as Winchester's work on salt marsh creation.

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It was noted that priority needs to be given to those areas of the county most at risk from flooding and it was suggested that catchment response times during heavy rainfall events needed to be assessed to help focus action. Short catchment response times are a particular concern in the Forest of Dean but it was noted that watercourses running off the Cotswold escarpment also contributed to localised flooding.

During summer months water stress due to over abstraction was also an issue and the pollution problems affecting the River Wye were also highlighted. CLG should develop linkages with Water Resources West and the water companies to understand how best to scale up nature based solutions to flood management.

It was agreed that it was important to link projects across administrative boundaries and to demonstrate the climate benefits of blue assets and the economic benefit of natural solutions. It was proposed that CLG invite an expert speaker(s) from Shropshire and/or Worcestershire to discuss coordinated climate action across the Severn catchment.

CLG also wanted to understand more clearly what project management resources are needed to deliver the strategic actions for water. The pivotal role of the Environment Agency was also highlighted in terms of managing the squeeze between sea level rise and the need to expand riparian zones as part of nature based solutions to alleviate flooding.

CLG were clear that all partners should avoid developments in the floodplain and the question was posed with regard to which habitats do we value the most? The role of woodland in terms of carbon sequestration was well understood but wetlands, bogs, and mires lock in twice as much carbon.

It was noted that Stroud District Council are about to refresh their Local Flood Resilience Strategy.

- 22/03 Action: GLNP to lead development of an action plan to deliver the strategic actions for water and the resources needed for delivery and to report back as part of the next Thematic update cycle.**
- 22/04 Action: CLG to take collective ownership of the actions being developed within each theme.**
- 22/05 Action: Secretariat to work with GLNP to identify guest speaker(s) to share wider catchment best practice for the Severn and Thames catchments at a future meeting.**

Green Infrastructure, Spaces for Nature and People, and Carbon

GNLP presented these three themes together as they are all interconnected and aligned to nature recovery actions and implementing nature based solutions in tackling climate change. The strong correlation between Green Infrastructure and the Planning theme was noted and there were opportunities to share skills, training and procurement to help ensure a joined up approach to GI provision.

GNLP set out a bold vision to create spaces for both nature and people including a nature park in Gloucester, a regional park along the Severn Vale and a call for new nature sites, parks to support local communities. The need to make these spaces more inviting and inclusive was noted.

On Carbon there was a clear need to deliver big treescape projects and there was the potential to connect the Forest of Dean with the Wyre Forest. The potential for peatland restoration, wetland recreation and sensitive farming practices to deliver carbon sequestration was highlighted and it was noted that the ambition was high. What is needed now is to develop the projects which can deliver.

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Rewilding initiatives elsewhere were highlighted and the example of the Knepp Estate was cited. Cllr McFarling also referred to the Forest of Dean's Biosphere initiative.

GNLP made the case for normalising the principles Building with Nature is seeking to achieve and highlighted the good work which the Cotswolds are doing to embed Building with Nature standards. Best practice elsewhere such as Sheffield's Developers Charter on Biodiversity was cited.

There was a need to engage proactively with the private sector and especially with land agents and consultant ecologists but current capacity to effect change is a big challenge. There is a need to align highways requirements and design standards with the ability of planning policy and the development control process to create more space for green infrastructure elements.

Cheltenham's Climate & Nature Supplementary Planning Document was referenced and it was recognised that there was a need to harmonise green infrastructure requirements, building with nature and highways standards, and planning policies across the county to make it easier for developers and the public to understand what needs to be delivered.

CLG agreed the 4 themes and 12 priority actions but noted that GLNP needed to consider the comments made in discussing the topic. CLG were also clear that further work was required to put more shape on the actions in terms of:

- Who is leading delivery of the actions
- What the timeframe for each action is
- The resource implications of making progress against each action
- Ensuring that CN2030 is co-ordinating activity across the actions to avoid duplication of effort.

In terms of resources and skills it was suggested that a skills matrix be developed to understand the resource spread across partners and to help in identifying those core projects which resources can be aligned around and shared between partners in a Team Gloucestershire approach.

The Secretariat noted that he intended to undertake a skills mapping exercise to help CLG understand better the resources currently available and to help identify gaps which might need addressing.

22/06 Action: Secretariat to undertake a skills mapping exercise and bring a skills/resource report back to CLG.

7. Thematic Updates Report (Paper 4)

CLG noted the Thematic Updates Report and it was agreed that any questions on the content would be e-mailed to the Secretariat so that he could liaise with the relevant SN2030 Lead Officers.

The Secretariat briefed CLG on the need to take an update report to the County Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee and that the intention was to use the Thematic Update report as a basis for the Scrutiny Report and this proposal was supported.

22/07 Action: Secretariat to draft report for the County Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee and circulate to CLG for comment prior to submission.

8. CLG Forward Look (Paper 5)

CLG discussed the forward programme and schedule of topics for future meetings. CLG also reflected on the time needed to discuss the biodiversity topic and recognised that having two discussion topics for each meeting would be challenging going forward.

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The point was made that making strong progress in some themes was more important than in others and that CLG needed to focus effort and resource on those areas of work which delivered the biggest decarbonisation returns.

CLG also discussed the topics for the April and June meetings and it was agreed that the Transport theme should be the substantive item for discussion at the April meeting with Waste being scheduled for the June meeting. CLG were clear that the focus on the Transport theme needed to be on the collective action that is required. It was also suggested that the Retrofit theme should be brought forwards for consideration earlier in for the year.

The need for at least one additional meeting was recognised.

- 22/08 **Action: Secretariat to bring forward discussion of the Transport Theme to the April meeting and liaise with theme leads accordingly.**
- 22/09 **Action: Secretariat to review the number of meetings scheduled for the year and propose a revised timetable and topic schedule for the remainder of the year based on 6 meetings.**

9. Any other Business

A member of CLG noted that they had not received an invitation for the meeting.

- 22/10 **Action: Secretariat to ensure that the invitation list for future meetings is correct.**